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Soviet Arms: The Third World Attraction and Soviet Benefits

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A Research Paper

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A Research Paper

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**Soviet Arms: The
Third World Attraction and
Soviet Benefits**

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Summary

*Information available
as of 10 January 1985
was used in this report.*

By all estimates Moscow will continue to rely heavily on arms sales and associated military training programs to expand its influence within the Third World. The degree to which the USSR will be able to cultivate new clients remains, however, at issue. To gain additional insight into the potential for continued Soviet inroads into the Third World on the basis of its arms sales program, we conducted a detailed survey of the reasons for Soviet arms sales successes and attendant gains in influence during the past decade.

The 16 countries we examined developed a dependency on the USSR and its allies for arms because:

- Moscow was willing to provide the desired hardware and training quickly and at low cost.
- The recipient had political or ideological ties to the USSR or Cuba.
- The recipient was either rebuffed in its efforts to purchase arms from the West or assumed Western suppliers would reject an arms request outright.

Not surprisingly, our survey pointed up several important Soviet gains resulting from arms sales successes:

- Regimes friendly to the USSR survived in the face of foreign or domestic military challenges.
- Numerous opportunities to penetrate the LDCs' political and military establishments developed through Soviet Bloc military advisers and through the training of large numbers of LDC personnel in Bloc nations.
- Seven of the 16 LDCs granted the Soviets access to their airfields and port facilities.
- The new arms recipients demonstrated increased support for Soviet foreign policy positions in international organizations and through other diplomatic channels.
- Sizable amounts of hard currency flowed into the USSR.

Moscow appears, however, to have established few commercial or ideological links to these Third World governments as a result of arms transfers. The civil aviation and fishing agreements signed with the 16 arms clients do not differ significantly from agreements signed with other LDCs. In addition, all of the LDCs for which the Bloc has been the principal arms supplier continue to trade with and receive economic assistance from Western governments. Moreover, we are not aware of any instance where a nonaligned regime has changed its ideological orientation because it obtained arms from the Soviet Bloc.

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Although we believe Third World countries will continue to seek arms for the same reasons that have motivated them to do so in the past, several factors are likely to combine to preclude Soviet transfers from matching the pace and scope of the 1970s:

- Many regimes will prefer the United States or West European governments as their arms suppliers, based on the mutual interests that have developed as a result of their political, economic, and ideological ties to the Western democracies.
 - The more aggressive arms sales policies of traditional Western arms suppliers, China, and new Third World suppliers—such as Brazil—are also likely to cut into Soviet sales. In the past several years, these suppliers have become more competitive, primarily by offering more advanced weapon systems and relaxing political and ideological restrictions as well as technology controls on sales to LDCs. The West European governments, in particular, are providing attractive financing packages and offset arrangements.
 - In addition, the lack of hard currency in an increasing number of Third World countries probably will dampen the growth of Soviet arms sales. We believe, nonetheless, that the USSR's perception that it can achieve strategic and political gains in the Third World through arms transfers will remain the key determinant in any decision to supply arms. Despite Moscow's desire to maximize hard currency earnings wherever possible, we believe it will continue to offer concessionary terms to sustain arms relationships with favored clients and to develop key new clients in the Third World.
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Scope Note

This Research Paper is one in a series that examines various aspects of Soviet and other Communist country programs that contribute to Communist penetration of the Third World. By surveying those countries that have become dependent upon Soviet arms over the past decade, it seeks to identify and rank the reasons for Soviet arms successes as well as the nature and degree of influence Moscow has gained as a result.

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Soviet Arms: The Third World Attraction and Soviet Benefits

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Introduction

This assessment focuses on 16 non-Communist LDCs, most of them located in Sub-Saharan Africa, that have developed major arms relationships with the Soviet Bloc—the USSR, its East European allies, and Cuba—since 1974 (figure 4).¹ In particular, we analyze the reasons why these countries have looked to the Soviet Bloc for arms instead of to the United States and Western Europe. We also discuss how Moscow has benefited from these arms relationships and assess its ability to acquire additional clients over the next decade.



We have had to make value judgments, especially in assessing why LDCs acquired Soviet Bloc arms and what gains the Soviets have achieved in their role as principal arms supplier. This analysis is intended to provide a broad, rather than a comprehensive, evaluation of Soviet Bloc arms sales to the Third World, and the ultimate impact of some gains—such as the acquisition of specific intelligence assets—is not considered.

Basic Tenets of Soviet Arms Transfer Policy

The USSR's arms transfer program is but one of a broad range of political, economic, and military tools the Soviets have used to support their foreign policy objectives in the Third World. While the nature and

¹ This analysis excludes LDCs—such as Jordan and Kuwait—that have received Soviet Bloc arms but do not depend on the Bloc as their principal source of supply; the Soviets have obtained some gains in those LDCs as well. The USSR has been the dominant arms supplier to LDCs, but East European governments and Cuba have played an important role complementing Soviet sales. Vietnam's arms relationships with Laos and Cambodia are excluded from this analysis because Hanoi's domination of these two neighbors provides ample explanation for its position as their principal arms supplier; arms sales by North Korea also are excluded because of its lack of coordinated goals with the USSR and its relatively more independent foreign policy.

relative importance of Soviet objectives vary from region to region, we believe that Moscow generally perceives the Third World in terms of an East-West superpower rivalry. The Soviets are interested primarily in developing links to LDCs that will bolster their position as a global power and pose new threats to US and West European interests. Specifically, Moscow wants to acquire:

- Access to military facilities that will serve to promote Soviet foreign policy goals, especially in crises or hostilities.
- Political support in international forums for Soviet foreign policy positions.
- Hard currency earnings.

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Arms transfers have been one of the USSR's most effective tools for expanding Soviet influence in the Third World. The Soviets developed their first arms clients in the late 1950s and early 1960s by exploiting Arab-Israeli tension, Yemen's conflict with Britain over Aden, and the Indo-Pakistani crisis. They offered arms and other military materiel to almost any LDC at low prices and with exceptionally generous repayment terms. They also provided rapid delivery and free training and maintenance. By the mid-1960s, the annual value of the Soviet program had reached about \$500 million, with most military assistance going to Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Afghanistan.

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In the early 1970s, Moscow's growing emphasis on hard currency earnings supplemented its quest for political and military advantage over the West. The new oil-based wealth of key clients in the Middle East and North Africa led the Soviets to toughen the terms of its military assistance—a policy they could enforce because comparable Western support invariably was more expensive. Continuing tensions in those regions, along with increasingly active nationalist movements and revolutions in Sub-Saharan Africa, broadened the opportunities for Moscow to sell arms to the Third World. Moscow usually was willing and able to

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Rationale for Acquiring Arms

Two primary factors motivated the 16 LDCs we examined to seek arms (figure 1). In six of the 16 cases, hostile relations with one or two neighboring countries was the primary motivation. Fear of a rebellion by dissidents, exiles supported by other governments, or mercenaries was the major precipitant in six other instances. Other reasons we noted were:

- *The threatened overthrow of the regime by an insurgency.*
- *The postindependence desire to establish a conventional military force.*
- *The ambition to acquire greater regional influence and international prestige.*
- *The desire to increase military aid to national liberation movements.*

Whereas most of the 16 LDCs had several reasons for seeking armaments, in six cases only one factor was significant. Benin, Madagascar, and Seychelles feared unrest from dissidents or exiles. In Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and Sao Tome and Principe, newly independent regimes wanted to establish armed forces, although they faced no specific external threat. []

respond rapidly, establishing a reputation as a dependable arms supplier. In recent years, because of competition from Western suppliers with more sophisticated weapons to sell, the Soviets have begun to provide some of their most advanced systems to selected clients. []

Rationale for Seeking Arms From the Soviet Bloc**Sales Policies**

The Soviet Bloc became the principal arms supplier to the 16 LDCs we examined primarily because it was willing to provide the desired hardware and training rapidly and on affordable terms (figure 2). At times Moscow offered more advanced weapon systems than those possessed by other countries in the region. The Soviets also made arms available at much lower prices

than those demanded by non-Communist suppliers, and the USSR was a dependable supplier:²

- Moscow replaced China as principal supplier to Mozambique and Tanzania in the mid-1970s by providing weapon systems that the Chinese could not or would not agree to sell.
- The USSR became Libya's principal arms supplier in 1974 when the Soviets outbid the French with an arms package that offered more weapons at less cost.
- The Soviets also agreed, albeit reluctantly at times, to satisfy Angolan requests for additional advisers and more equipment to counter the growing military threat posed by the insurgent National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (UNITA) and by South Africa. []

The Soviets also have been quick to offer attractive arms packages to Third World countries after the West had refused them arms. For example, when Peru and Ethiopia were unable to obtain from the United States weapons that they considered essential in 1972 and 1975, respectively, the Soviets provided package deals that included the weapons desired by the regimes at very favorable rates. Moscow—in contrast with some Western suppliers—has not refused to sell arms because the buyer acted brutally toward its people, was seeking to overthrow a neighboring government, or supported international terrorists. []

Political and Ideological Ties

The existence of political and ideological ties to the USSR and its allies predisposed eight of the 16 LDCs to acquire arms from the Soviet Bloc rather than from the West. In most cases, the LDC leaders developed ties to the Soviet Bloc when they were directing their liberation movements, well before they gained power:

- Soviet links to the African Party for the Independence of Portuguese Guinea and Cape Verde

² Moscow has not offered such prices to all its arms clients; for example, Libya has paid much higher prices than other LDCs for its Soviet arms. []

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Figure 1
Rationale for Acquiring Arms

Legend	Angola	Benin	Burundi	Cape Verde	Congo	Ethiopia	Guinea-Bissau	Libya	Madagascar	Mozambique	Nicaragua	Peru	Sao Tome and Principe	Seychelles	Tanzania	Zambia
● Primary precipitant																
○ Secondary precipitant																
External enemy	●		○		○	●		○		●	○	●	●		○	●
Fear of rebellion		●	●		●	○			●		●		○	●		
Insurgency	●					○				●						
Establishment of new armed forces	○			●			●			○	○					
Power and prestige								●			○				●	
To aid liberation groups	○				○			○		○	○				○	○

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Figure 2
Rationale for Seeking Soviet Bloc Arms

Legend	Angola	Benin	Burundi	Cape Verde	Congo	Ethiopia	Guinea-Bissau	Libya	Madagascar	Mozambique	Nicaragua	Peru	Sao Tome and Principe	Seychelles	Tanzania	Zambia
● Primary precipitant																
○ Secondary precipitant																
Soviet sales policy	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	○	●	●	●	●
Previous close ties to Soviet Bloc	○			●			●			○	●					
Marxist-Leninist orientation	○	●			●	○				○	○					
US refusal						●			●			●				○
West European refusal			○						●							○
Anticipation of US and West European refusal		○			○			○			○		○			

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(PAIGC) predated the independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde by several years.

- Moscow's links to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) date from 1956, and to the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) from 1964.
- Cuban ties to Nicaragua's Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) were first established in the mid-1960s.

The Marxist leaders in Benin and Congo did not have political or ideological ties to the Soviet Bloc before gaining power, but both formally proclaimed their countries to be Marxist-Leninist states before buying Soviet Bloc arms. The Ethiopian leaders who seized power in 1974 also were Marxist; the new regime, however, initially sought arms from the West because Moscow at that time was principal arms supplier to Ethiopia's main enemy, Somalia.

US and West European Refusals

Five of the LDCs we examined purchased arms from the Soviet Bloc only after Western governments had turned down their requests for weapons. All of them had developed strong political ties to the West, and all but Ethiopia have continued to purchase Western arms. In each instance, the Soviets took advantage of Western refusals—variously based on political, ideological, bureaucratic, and economic considerations—to offer arms packages on favorable terms that usually were tailored to a regime's specific desires:

- Moscow began shipping arms to Ethiopia in 1977, after the United States suspended arms supplies to Ethiopia's new leadership in opposition to the 1974 coup and its radical ideology.
- In 1972 Congress declared Peru ineligible for Foreign Military Sales credit because of Lima's seizure of US tuna fishing boats; the specific US tanks desired by Peru also were unavailable for export that year. When the sanctions were waived in 1973, Lima already was finalizing a deal with the USSR.
- France refused to sell arms to Madagascar after the Ramanantsoa regime drastically cut the French presence in 1973; two years later Antananarivo approached the United States, seeking weapons under the US Foreign Military Sales program, and turned to the Soviets when told it was eligible only for cash sales.

Arms Clients That Turned Away From Moscow

Of the 35 non-Communist LDCs that have been dependent on the Soviet Bloc for arms since 1954, seven—Bangladesh, Egypt, Ghana, Grenada, Indonesia, Somalia, and Sudan—no longer maintain a major arms relationship with Moscow or its allies.

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In four instances—Ghana, Indonesia, Sudan, and Grenada—the arms relationship ended following a coup or attempted coup. In 1966, Ghanaian military leaders overthrew President Nkrumah, citing corruption and his Marxist policies, and kicked out his Soviet friends as well. Indonesia in 1965 and Sudan in 1971 turned against Moscow after local Communists led coup attempts. Both regimes believed that the Soviets were involved in the plots. Other arms recipients—such as Benin, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Afghanistan, and Peru—have also experienced coups or coup attempts, in some cases involving the USSR or a Marxist leadership, and have continued to look to the Soviet Bloc as their major arms supplier. Grenada experienced a military coup in October 1983 but did not terminate its Soviet connection until the US intervention later that month.

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Egypt and Somalia turned toward the West in large part out of displeasure with Moscow's interruption of arms deliveries to pressure them into changing their policies. Although the Soviets continued major arms deliveries to Egypt after President Sadat expelled their military advisers in 1972—allowing Egypt to prepare for the October 1973 war with Israel—they sought in 1975 to influence Sadat to reconsider his course by curtailing shipments. In 1976-77, Sadat closed Soviet military facilities, abrogated the friendship treaty, and looked to the West for arms. Moscow also halted arms to Somalia in the mid-1970s, when President Siad refused to relax his hold on the Ogaden region, and offered to supply arms to Somalia's enemy Ethiopia. In 1977, Siad expelled Soviet advisers, closed Soviet military facilities, and abrogated the friendship treaty.

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Bangladesh moved away from the USSR after President Zia, who favored closer relations with China and the United States, assumed power in 1977. In 1978-79, Bangladesh opposed both the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and the Soviet intrusion into Afghanistan.

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- After 1973 the Belgians stopped supplying arms to Burundi because they strongly disapproved of the Tutsi regime's genocide against the Hutu opposition, and Moscow stepped in as principal supplier in 1977.

- When the United States and Britain turned down Zambia's requests for arms that were prompted by Rhodesia's cross-border operations in the early 1970s, the Zambians signed arms deals with China and the USSR. The Soviets became the principal supplier in 1979. []

The Soviets have continued to take advantage of Third World discontent with Western arms sales policies. In 1981 Jordan bought SA-8 surface-to-air missiles and ZSU-23-4 air defense artillery from the USSR when Washington refused to supply requested weapons or offer concessionary sales. The Jordanians purchased additional Soviet missiles this past December largely because of US unwillingness in early 1984 to sell Stinger surface-to-air missiles and other air defense materiel to Amman. King Hussein, however, still prefers Western and especially US equipment and training. Similarly, after Washington also refused a Kuwaiti request for Stinger missiles, Kuwait and the USSR initialed an arms agreement and Moscow offered to provide additional military assistance. In addition, Burkina (formerly Upper Volta) received small arms and military equipment from the Soviets following a US denial of military aid in the spring of 1984. []

Several Third World countries have been receptive to Soviet offers of arms packages because they believed the United States and West European governments would turn down their requests to purchase arms:

- After independence, Congo turned to China and then the Soviet Bloc as principal arms supplier, because it perceived France, its former colonial ruler, as unfriendly.
- Although Benin has continued to get some arms and training from France, the Kerekou regime's belief that the French supported an attempted coup in early 1977 has strongly reinforced its preference for the Soviets as principal supplier.

- In Seychelles, President Rene's view that Western countries have supported dissidents has made him amenable to offers of Soviet arms. []

Soviet Gains From Arms Sales ³

Survival of Pro-Soviet Regimes

Soviet Bloc arms sales have provided a military underpinning critical to the survival of the pro-Soviet leaders of Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, and Nicaragua:

- The Mengistu regime has been able to prevent Somalia and various insurgent groups from dismembering Ethiopia.
- In Angola the MPLA was able to emerge as the dominant faction when the country gained independence in 1975, and it has survived against the UNITA insurgency and South African incursions.
- Similarly, the FRELIMO leadership in Mozambique after independence in 1975 was able to combat Rhodesian incursions and continues to struggle against the South African-backed insurgent Mozambique National Resistance.
- In Nicaragua the Sandinistas have developed a relatively formidable military structure with a growing counterinsurgency and conventional capability. []

The presence of large numbers of Cuban military personnel in Angola, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and—to a lesser extent—Mozambique also has contributed to the survival of these regimes, but the provision of armaments probably is a more critical factor. For example, the Angolan and Ethiopian Governments have proposed a reduction in the Cuban military

³ In assessing Soviet gains, we have focused our analysis on whether they have been related directly to Bloc arms transfers and not other factors. Thus we pay special attention to whether the gains preceded or followed within two years of the year in which the Soviet Bloc became principal arms supplier by virtue of arms deliveries. []

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Figure 3
Soviet Bloc Gains From Arms Sales, 1974-84

Legend

- Gain occurred no more than two years after weapons delivery
- ✦ Gain occurred after arms agreement but before weapons delivery
- Gain occurred more than two years after weapons delivery
- ◐ Gain preceded arms agreement
- ? Insufficient trade data

		Angola	Benin	Burundi	Cape Verde	Congo	Ethiopia	Guinea-Bissau	Libya	Madagascar	Mozambique	Nicaragua	Peru	Sao Tome and Principe	Seychelles	Tanzania	Zambia
Access and Assets	Soviet Bloc military advisers in country	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	LDC military trainees in Soviet Bloc	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
	Reciprocal visits by high-level military officials	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
	Soviet Bloc diplomatic representation in country	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●			●			
	Reciprocal visits by high-level political officials	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	LDC students studying in Soviet Bloc	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Military Planning Capabilities	Use of airfield for naval reconnaissance aircraft	●					●	●									
	Use of port facilities for naval vessels	●					●	●									
	Port of call		●							●				●			
	Transport aircraft stationed in country	●						●	●	●							
	Emplacement of signals intelligence sites	●					●	●	●	●	●						
	Emplacement of Cuban combat troops	●					●				●						
Commercial Ties	Civil air agreements for Aeroflot	●	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
	Fishing agreements	●	●				●			●	●	●		●	●		
	Trade			●	?		●			●	?		?			●	
Ideological and Organizational Ties	LCD declaration of Communist party																
	LCD declaration of vanguard party	●	● ^b			● ^b	●			●							
	Party-to-party agreements	●	●			●	●			●	●				●	●	
	Party-to-party visits	●	●		●	●	○	●	●	●	●				●	●	

^a Madagascar has dismantled its sites.

^b Benin and the Congo declared their parties to be Marxist-Leninist, but the USSR does not recognize them as such.

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presence, but would not countenance severing their arms relationships with the USSR. Similarly, the leadership in Mozambique, despite its recent security pact with South Africa, continues to believe that Soviet Bloc arms and other military support are critical to its survival and hence strongly supports Soviet positions in the Nonaligned Movement. []

Access and Assets

In all 16 LDCs, the development of an arms relationship has given the Soviets greater access to the military and political establishments and the ability to engage in intelligence activities. We believe, moreover, that the arms relationships in countries such as Angola and Ethiopia have provided Moscow opportunities to influence their decisionmaking processes. In virtually all instances, the number of Soviet Bloc military advisers in the recipient nations and the number of LDC students in Soviet Bloc countries rose—often dramatically—after the Bloc became the key source of armaments. Similar increases also were noted in the number of LDC military trainees in Bloc nations, Bloc diplomats in recipient countries, and reciprocal military and political visits (figure 3). []

For example, in 1975—two years before the Soviet Bloc became the principal arms supplier to Ethiopia—visits by Soviet officials to Ethiopia were infrequent, and fewer than 1,000 Ethiopians were studying in Bloc countries. By 1978 more than 1,700 Soviet military advisers were in Ethiopia, almost 2,000 Ethiopian students and military trainees were in Bloc countries, and the number of official military and political visits had soared. []

When Nicaragua entered into its first arms agreement with the Bloc in 1979, the only Bloc military advisers in country were from Eastern Europe and Cuba and, at that time, fewer than 300 Nicaraguan soldiers and students were studying in Bloc countries. By 1983, however, Nicaragua was host to some 3,000 Cuban, 100 Soviet, and 60 East European military advisers, while the Nicaraguan presence in Bloc countries had more than quadrupled. []

No less important, during the past decade Soviet Bloc military advisers have been present only in countries that have purchased arms from the Soviet Bloc. Except for Ghana—a former arms client—no LDC has sent military trainees to Bloc countries unless it has also purchased arms from them. []

Moscow's advisory and training programs have benefited the USSR in several ways. To the extent that the USSR has expanded its presence abroad and stepped up its training in the USSR at the expense of the West, Moscow has realized its goal of denying or reducing non-Communist initiatives. The Soviets also have obtained increased influence over some client states by training persons who now hold positions of key responsibility in their government. For example, Col. Henrique "Iko" Carreria of Angola, a former Minister of Defense, is the presidential adviser on defense matters and recently was appointed chief of the Air Force. He received training in the USSR from late 1979 until mid-1982 and has worked closely with Soviet advisers in Angola. In addition, Fikre-Selassie Wogdress, secretary general of Ethiopia's Provisional Military Administrative Council and one of the most influential and pro-Soviet members of the regime, had nine months of political indoctrination in the USSR. He previously received pilot training in the United States. []

Military Planning and Operational Capabilities

LDC arms relationships with the Soviets and their allies have led to enhanced Soviet access to Third World airfields or port facilities in about half the countries we examined (figure 3). Such access has significantly benefited Soviet military operations as well as contingency planning:

- Access to airfields in Angola, Libya, and Ethiopia over the past decade has allowed the Soviets to conduct naval reconnaissance in the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Red Sea.⁴
- The use of port facilities in Angola, Ethiopia, Libya, and Mozambique as well as permission to call at ports in Benin and Seychelles have increased the flexibility of Soviet naval operations.
- Moscow has been able to base transport aircraft in Angola, Madagascar, and Mozambique, giving it the potential to respond to requests for support by southern African governments.⁵ []

⁴ In the case of Libya, other factors—a perceived threat from the United States, for example—also account for Soviet military access. []

⁵ The Soviets also have gained access to airfields and port facilities in LDCs that became arms clients before 1974, including Afghanistan, Cuba, South Yemen, and Syria. []

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The Question of Soviet Leverage

The character of Soviet military assistance to ideologically disparate LDCs over the past 30 years indicates that, once an arms relationship has been established, Moscow seeks leverage over its clients. Most often, the Soviets have pursued this objective by restricting the flow of spare parts and other follow-on support, citing financial or political reasons. During the past year, for example, the Soviets have delayed or threatened to halt arms deliveries to Libya, Peru, and Tanzania because of nonpayment. In addition, Moscow restricted arms shipments to Iraq from late 1980 to early 1981 to signal disapproval of its war with Iran. []

Soviet efforts to obtain leverage over LDCs extend to training as well. The Soviets often provide only minimal instruction, reflecting their penchant for secrecy; this approach also helps maintain client dependency. For example, Mozambican pilot trainees in the USSR in the late 1970s received only basic instruction in flying their advanced fighter aircraft. Moreover, the Soviets have maintained control over the maintenance and play an important role in the operation of most of the sophisticated equipment provided to Peru. []

It is difficult to document whether Soviet attempts to obtain leverage have been successful. The ability of an LDC to counteract Soviet tactics depends on various political, economic, and military considerations. In some instances, important Third World clients—such as Angola, Iraq, and Syria—have taken advantage of crises to force the Soviets to reconsider decisions to halt arms deliveries or refusals to make new arms commitments. []

[] the presence of Cuban combat troops in Angola, Ethiopia, and Nicaragua continues to enhance Moscow's political and military influence in these countries. []

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We believe that Moscow achieved these gains primarily because of its arms relationships. Most were obtained shortly after arms deliveries were initiated, although in some instances five to 10 years elapsed between the deliveries and the gain. Moreover, with the exception of occasional Soviet naval visits to Mauritius, Singapore, and Tunisia, the Soviets have acquired military gains only in LDCs for which the Bloc is the principal source of arms. About half the LDC arms recipients—including Benin, Cape Verde, Congo, Madagascar, Mozambique, Peru, and Seychelles—however, have turned aside overtures by Moscow to grant it basing rights and port access. []

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Foreign Policy Support

We believe that Soviet arms transfers have been an important reason why most of the 16 LDCs we examined have strongly supported Soviet foreign policy positions in their rhetoric, international organizations, and other diplomacy, on issues as diverse as Afghanistan, Cambodia, and the Olympics. The principal exceptions are Burundi, Peru, Tanzania, and Zambia:

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- Since 1980 Angola, Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Mozambique have consistently voted with Moscow in opposing the UN General Assembly's annual resolution on Afghanistan; Libya and Seychelles have supported the Soviet position when they have voted.
- Seven of the 16 LDCs—Angola, Cape Verde, Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Seychelles—have diplomatic relations with the Vietnamese- and Soviet-backed Heng Samrin regime in Cambodia; with the exception of the Warsaw Pact nations, Cuba, Yugoslavia, and Guyana, the only other governments that have recognized this regime are Soviet Bloc arms clients such as India, Laos, and South Yemen.

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- In the 1980 Olympics, all 16 of the LDCs participated, whereas many other LDCs boycotted the Moscow games. In 1984, however, only Angola and Ethiopia joined Moscow's boycott of the Los Angeles Olympics. []

Unlike issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and South Africa, on which most Third World nations usually vote together, the issues noted above sharply distinguish those LDCs that depend on the Soviet Bloc for arms from other members of the Nonaligned Movement. If not for their close military relationship with the Soviets, we believe these regimes would adopt different positions in those cases where Moscow's and the Nonaligned Movement's interests diverge. []

Hard Currency Sales

Arms sales have provided the Soviets with a significant source of much-needed hard currency. Following the 1973 oil embargo and ensuing higher oil prices, Moscow increased its arms prices, eliminated price discounts to all but a few clients, and toughened payment terms, especially to LDCs in the Middle East and North Africa. Increased Soviet sales to old clients, bolstered by sales to new customers and the transfer of complex weapon systems, propelled the USSR during 1974-79 into second place, behind the United States, in the global arms market with agreements estimated at \$35 billion. Soviet military sales peaked at about \$14 billion in 1980, and ensured surpluses in Moscow's balance of trade with the Third World. []

We believe constraints such as LDC debt, increased competition, and diversification of suppliers now outweigh the factors that led to progressively higher Soviet sales during the 1970s:

- Growing financial problems, even for well-off clients like Libya, have limited the LDCs' ability to make repayments on arms purchases from the USSR.
- Competition from Western and Third World arms suppliers has cut into Soviet sales.
- Many clients have increasingly tended to upgrade their inventories selectively with follow-on support equipment, rather than replace entire weapon systems.

Thus, we estimate that Soviet arms sales, which slumped to about \$3 billion in 1983, probably will

rebound to only \$7 billion this year. This total largely depends on commitments already made to Iraq, India, Angola, Kuwait, and Syria. []

To redress their deteriorating position, the Soviets have tried to reestablish a reputation as a reliable supplier by providing relatively advanced hardware. Angola has received MIG-23 fighter aircraft as well as HIND-D helicopters; the helicopters also have been supplied to Mozambique and Nicaragua. In addition, Moscow has remained flexible in dealing with the financial problems of most key clients. For example, large deliveries to Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique have been made despite their arrearages in payments. Even Libya, which has failed to make timely payments, received \$600 million worth of deliveries in 1983. Moscow also has extended generous terms to clients such as Nicaragua. []

Commercial Ties

We believe the Soviets have reaped few nonmilitary commercial gains as a result of arms relationships that they established with the 16 LDCs. Moscow generally has developed similar commercial links with other non-Communist LDCs that have not been major arms clients (figure 3):

- While the Soviet airline Aeroflot serves 15 of these arms recipients, Aeroflot also flies to 34 other LDCs that have received no Bloc arms or are primarily Western arms clients.
- Moscow has fishing agreements with eight of the 16 LDCs but also with 31 others.
- Overall Soviet trade—imports and exports—rose only in Burundi, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Zambia following Bloc arms sales; although Soviet Bloc exports generally increased among the arms recipients, we believe that the higher level usually reflected little more than the arms sales. []

More important, none of the 16 LDCs has lost interest in developing trade and other economic contacts with the West while acquiring its arms from the

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Soviet Bloc. The growth in Soviet trade has not led to any redirection of the overall trade patterns among these 16 arms recipients—the United States and West European countries generally have remained their major trading partners. In fact, in most cases, including Ethiopia, US trade following Soviet Bloc arms sales has increased despite tensions caused by other aspects of their bilateral relations. West European governments generally have fared better than the United States in maintaining and increasing their trade with these countries, most of which are former colonies. []

Ideological and Organizational Ties

We believe Moscow's position as principal arms supplier generally has not led its clients to adopt a more Communist ideological orientation or closer party ties with the Bloc. Three possible exceptions are Angola and Mozambique—which declared their ruling parties Marxist-Leninist vanguard parties shortly after the Bloc became their principal arms supplier—and Ethiopia, which recently claimed to have established a Marxist-Leninist ruling party (figure 3). The LDCs' pro-Soviet attitudes and party-to-party relationships that exist with the CPSU generally can be traced to the strong beliefs of the LDC leaders and to ties predating major arms agreements with the Bloc:

- Although virtually all the initial exchanges of party officials followed arms agreements with the Soviet Bloc, such exchanges began before the Bloc made major arms deliveries. Soviet party officials formally visited Ethiopia even before the new regime's first arms agreement was signed with Moscow.
- The leaders of Benin and Congo declared their ruling parties Marxist-Leninist before developing a major arms relationship with the Bloc.
- The leaders of the ruling parties in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Nicaragua committed their parties to Marxist principles and developed close ties with Moscow and its allies before gaining power. []

Outlook

Over the next decade, we believe that the Soviets and their allies will have numerous opportunities to ex-

pand their arms transfers to Third World governments. Most LDCs will continue to seek arms for the same reasons—external or domestic threats, insurgent threats, and armed forces modernization—that have led non-Communist LDCs to acquire weapon systems during the past 10 years. []

The Soviets are likely to acquire some new arms clients as a result of coups or other regime changes. In particular, insurgent groups that already have established ties to the Soviet Bloc, such as the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador and the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), are almost certain to seek arms from the Bloc if they gain power. Moreover, leaders who would be more susceptible to Soviet arms sales policies could come to power by constitutional means or by force in countries such as Lebanon, Suriname, and Nigeria. Other LDCs that are not Soviet clients also could turn to the Soviet Bloc if their current arms suppliers cannot or will not sell them new weapon systems. []

Despite such broad opportunities, we believe that the pace and scope of Soviet Bloc arms transfers will be more limited in the next decade than has been the case in the past 10 years. Two major factors will be stiffer competition among arms suppliers to the Third World and continuing LDC economic ties and ideological compatibility with the West. Traditional suppliers such as the United States, West European countries, and China, as well as new Third World suppliers like Brazil have adopted more aggressive production and marketing policies. They now are offering state-of-the-art weapons, loosening restrictions and technology controls on arms exports to LDCs, providing attractive financing packages and offset arrangements to ease payments, and establishing maintenance facilities and increasing training for arms recipients. Brazil already has made some significant inroads, selling arms primarily to LDCs in the Middle East such as Iraq, Egypt, and Libya, but also to Gabon, Thailand, and Colombia. []

In our judgment, the mutual interests that many LDCs have developed with Western governments as a

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result of political, economic, and ideological ties are likely to preclude those regimes from acquiring Soviet arms. Most countries in Latin America and Southeast Asia prefer dealing with the West and probably will still be able to obtain arms from the United States or West European suppliers. In Africa and the Middle East, many LDCs that at present are not Soviet Bloc arms clients—such as Kenya, Cameroon, Botswana, and Morocco—would prefer to continue acquiring arms from the West, but some could prove more susceptible to Soviet offers, especially if they are turned down by the United States and West European governments.

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In addition, the inability of a growing number of LDCs to pay for arms with hard currency could have a dampening effect on Soviet arms sales. We judge, however, that Moscow's perception of the opportunity to achieve geopolitical gains in the Third World will remain the paramount factor in any decision to supply arms. While the Soviets generally will seek to maximize hard currency earnings, we believe they will continue to offer concessionary terms as necessary in order to sustain arms relationships with favored clients and to establish new ones—particularly in those instances when the West refuses to sell arms to traditional clients or other key LDCs.

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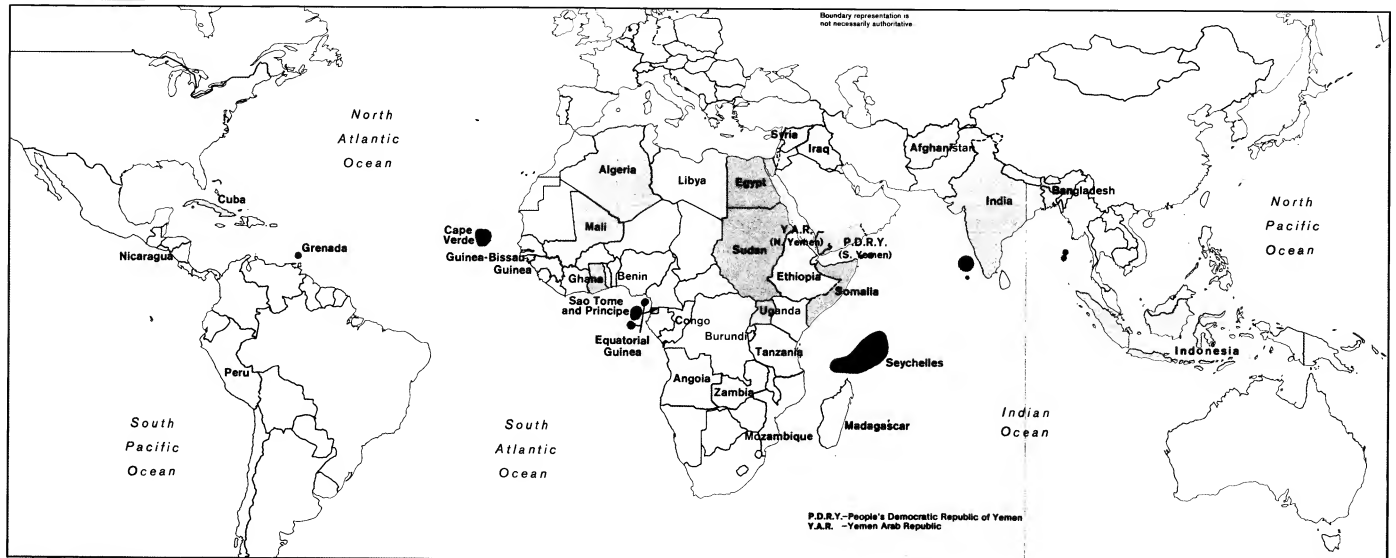
Figure 4

Non-Communist Clients for Soviet Bloc Arms in the Third World

Present clients*

Became client 1974-84 **Angola**
Became client 1955-73 **India**

Former clients **Ghana**



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USSR, Warsaw Pact Members, and Cuba:
Major Military Equipment Deliveries, 1974-83 (continued)[illegible]

^a Some of these are jet bombers.
^b Equipment was delivered, but number is unavailable.
^c Includes helicopters and transports.

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